اِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَهْدِيْ لِلَّتِيْ هِيَ اَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا كَبِيْرًا

Quran English Translation and Tafseer

Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi

Surah 76 - Al-Insan (Man), also known as Surah Ad-Dahr (Time)

سُوْرَةُ الدَّهْرِ مَدَنِيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

(In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate)

هَلْ اَتٰى عَلَى الْاِنْسَانِ حِيْنٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُنْ شَيْـًٔا مَّذْكُوْرًا ١

(76-1) Was there a period of time when man was not even worthy of a mention? (1)

(1) Most of the commentators and translators have taken hal in the first sentence hal ata alal-insan-i, in the meaning of qad. Accordingly, they interpret this sentence to mean; “No doubt, there has indeed passed on man a time.” But, in fact, the word hal in Arabic is used only as an interrogative particle, and its object is not to ask a question in every case, but this apparently interrogative particle is used in different meanings on different occasions. For example, sometimes, in order to find out whether a certain incident has taken place or not, we ask: “Has this thing happened?” Sometimes, we do not mean to ask a question but to deny something and we express the denial, thus: “Can any other also do this?” Sometimes, we want somebody to affirm something and so ask him: “Have I paid what was due to you?” And sometimes, we do not intend to have something just affirmed but we put a question in order to make the addressee pay particular attention to something which follows his affirmation as a sequel. For example, we ask someone: “Have I harmed you in any way?” The object is not only to make him affirm that one has not done him any harm, but also to make him think how far one is justified to harm somebody who has not harmed him in any way. The interrogative sentence in the verse before us illustrates this last meaning. The object is not only to make man affirm that there has indeed passed on him such a time but also to make him think that the God Who developed and shaped him into a perfect man from an insignificant, humble beginning, would not be helpless to create him once again.

In the second sentence, hin um-min ad-dahr the word dahr implies the endless time, the beginning and end of which are unknown to man and this is the particular period of time which might at some time have passed during this endless period. What is meant to be said is that in this immensely long span of time there has passed a long period when human race was altogether non-existent. Then a time came in it when a species called man was created, and in the same period a time has passed on every person when a beginning was made to bring him into existence from nothingness.

The third sentence, “When he was not a thing (even) to be mentioned” implies that a part of him existed in the form of a microscopic gene in the sperm drop of the father and a part in the form of a microscopic ovum in the mother. For long ages man did not even know that he comes into being when the sperm gene and the ovum combined. Now both have been observed by means of powerful microscopes but even now no one can say how much of man exists in the father’s sperm and how much in the mother’s ovum. Then, the initial cell that comes into being by the combination of the two at the time of conception is such an insignificant thing that it can be seen only through highly powerful microscopes, and seeing it also no one at first sight can claim that it is a man taking shape, nor that even if a man emerges from this humble beginning, what will be his size and stature, what will be his form and figure, and what will be his capabilities and personality like. This is the meaning of the sentence that at that time he was not yet a thing worthy of any mention although a beginning of his being as a man had been made.

إِنَّا خَلَقۡنَا ٱلۡإِنسَٰنَ مِن نُّطۡفَةٍ أَمۡشَاجٖ نَّبۡتَلِيهِ فَجَعَلۡنَٰهُ سَمِيعَۢا بَصِيرًا ٢

(76-2) Verily We created man out of a drop of intermingled sperm (2) so that We might try him, (3) and We therefore endowed him with hearing and sight. (4)

(2) “From a mixed sperm drop”: From the intermingling of the male sperm with the female ovum and not separately from the sperm or the ovum. During sexual intercourse normally 200-500 million sperms are deposited into the female birth canal. The sperms swim and reach site of mixing with ovum in 4-6 hours on an average time. Most of the sperms are lost in this journey. Chemical changes occur during this travel and sperms remove their protective covering from their heads while getting ready to release special chemicals from the heads in their attempts and preparation to penetrate into the ovum. Usually, only one sperm is allowed to fuse and mix with the ovum. (Ref. Maternity and Gynecology Care, Mosby Year Book Publishing Inc. St Louis Missouri USA Chapter 7, Page 162).

(3) This shows man’s real position in the world and the position of the world for man. He is not like the trees and animals that the object of his creation be fulfilled on the earth itself, and he should die and perish here after he has played his appointed role over a period of time according to the law of nature. Furthermore, this world is neither a place of punishment for him, as the monks think, nor a place of rewards as the believers of the law of transmigration think, nor a place of entertainment and enjoyment, as the materialists think, nor a battlefield, as the followers of atheists think, but in fact it is a place of test and trial for him. That which he regards as his age, is in fact the time given to him for the test. Whatever powers and capabilities he has been given in the world, the things that have been placed under his control and authority, the various positions and capacities in which he functions, and the relationships that he enjoys with other people, all these are the countless manners of the test and this test continues till the last breath of his life. The result is not to be announced in this world but in the Hereafter when all his answer books will have been assessed, decision will be given whether he has come out successful or failed. And his success or failure wholly depends on what he thought of himself while he functioned here and how he answered the questions that were given to him here. If he believed that he had no God, or that he was the slave of many gods, and while answering the questions he thought that he was not to be held accountable before his Creator in the Hereafter, his whole lifework went wrong. And if he regarded himself as the slave of One God and worked in the way

approved by God, with the accountability of the Hereafter always in view, he stood successful in the test. This theme has occurred at many places in the Quran.

(4) The words sami (hearing) and baseer (seeing) in the original text actually imply being “sensible and intelligent”. These words of the Arabic language are never used in respect of the animal although it also hears and sees. Thus, hearing and seeing here do not imply the powers of hearing and seeing which have been given to the animals too, but those means through which man obtains knowledge and then draws conclusions from it. Besides, since hearing and seeing are among the most important means of knowledge for man, only these two have been mentioned briefly; otherwise it actually implies giving man all those senses of the body by which he gathers information. Then the senses given to man are quite different in their nature from those given to animals, for at the back of every sense he has a thinking brain, which collects information gained through the senses; arranges it, draws conclusions from it, forms opinions, and then takes some decisions which become the basis of his attitude and conduct in life. Hence, after saying, “We created man in order to try him,” to say, “therefore, We made him capable of hearing and seeing” actually contains the meaning that Allah gave him the faculties of knowledge and reason to enable him to take the test. Obviously, if this were not the meaning and the meaning of making man hearing and seeing just implied the one who could hear and see, then a blind and deaf person would stand exempted from the test, whereas unless a person is utterly devoid of knowledge and reason, there can be no question of his being exempted from the test.

اِنَّا ہَدَیۡنٰہُ السَّبِیۡلَ اِمَّا شَاکِرًا وَّ اِمَّا کَفُوۡرًا ۝۳

(76-3) Surely We showed him the Right Path, regardless of whether he chooses to be thankful or unthankful (5) (to his Lord).

(5) That is, We did not just leave him to himself after giving him the powers of knowledge and reason, but We also guided him so that he knows which is the path of gratefulness and which of

ungratefulness, so that whichever path he chooses in his later life, he himself is responsible for it. In Surah Al-Balad, the same subject has been expressed, thus “And We showed him both the conspicuous ways (of good and evil).” And in Surah Ash-Shams, thus: “By the human self, and by Him Who balanced it (with all the external and internal powers), then inspired it with its wickedness and its piety.” When all these explanations are kept in view, and also those detailed statements of the Quran in which it has been stated what arrangements Allah has made for man’s guidance in the world, it becomes evident that in this verse “We guided him to the way” does not imply any one form of guidance but many forms of it which are limitless and countless. For example:

(1) Along with the faculties of knowledge and reason, man has also been endowed with a moral sense by which he discerns between good and evil, regards some acts and qualities as evil even if he himself is involved in them, and regards some other acts and qualities as good even if he himself is avoiding them. So much so that even those people who for the satisfaction of their selfish motives and desires have invented philosophies by which they have justified many evils for themselves, protest loudly when they are themselves treated with the same evils by others, and then it becomes known that in spite of their false philosophies they actually regard them as evil. Likewise, when a man himself is benefited by a good treatment from another person, he is from within forced to commend and appreciate it even though he might be looking upon good acts and qualities as ignorance folly and antiquated things,

(2) In every man Allah has placed the faculty of conscience (the lawwamah), which checks and pricks him every time he is about to commit an evil, or is in the process of committing it, or has already committed it. However hard man may try to silence his conscience or make it insensitive, he does not have the power to destroy it completely. He may become shameless and prove himself to be absolutely devoid of the conscience, he may also try to deceive the world by argumentation, he may even invent a thousand excuses to justify

his acts in order to deceive himself, but despite all this the censor, that Allah has placed in his nature, is so active and powerful that it does not let remain hidden from an evil person what he actually is. This same thing has been stated in Surah Al-Qiyamah, thus: “Man knows his own self best even though he may offer many excuses.” (Ayat 15).

(3) In man’s own self and outside of him, from the earth to the heavens, there lie scattered in the universe countless such signs which clearly show that all this could not happen without a God, nor could there be many gods to create this life and control and administer it. Likewise, these very signs, inside man and outside him, clearly point also to the Resurrection and Hereafter. If man shuts down his eyes on them, or refuses to ponder over them intelligently, or avoids to admit the truths which they point out, he himself would be to blame. For Allah has shown no negligence in laying out every possible sign of the truth for the guidance of man.

(4) Man does come across in his own life, and in the contemporary world and in the experiences of past history, countless such incidents which prove that a supreme power is ruling over him and the entire universe, before Whom he is absolutely powerless, whose Will is dominant over everything and whose help he needs at every moment. These experiences and observations which point to the truth do not exist only outside him but in man’s own nature as well there exists the evidence of the existence of the supreme power on the basis of which even the most confirmed atheist spreads out his hands in prayer before God when in distress, and the most hardened polytheist abandons all false gods and starts invoking One God only for help.

(5) Man’s intellect and his nature assert positively that crime ought to be punished and good deeds ought to be rewarded. On this very basis in every society of the world a system of the courts is established in one form or another. The services and works, which are regarded as commendable are also rewarded in one way or another. This is a clear proof of the fact that there is a necessary relationship between morality and the

law of retribution, which man cannot possibly deny. Now, if it is admitted that in this world there are countless such crimes which cannot be punished at all to say nothing of punishing them fully and adequately, and there are also countless such virtues, which cannot be rewarded at all, to say nothing of rewarding them fully and adequately, there is no alternative but to acknowledge the Hereafter. Unless, of course, a foolish person may assume, or a stubborn person may insist on having the opinion, that man who has been endowed with the concept of justice, has taken birth in a world which in itself is devoid of the concept of justice; and then it remains for him to answer the question as to how and wherefrom this man, who was born in such a world, obtained this concept of justice.

To reinforce these means of guidance Allah sent Messengers and revealed Books in the world for the purpose of giving clear and definite guidance to man. In these Books it was clearly explained what is the way of gratefulness and what is the way of ungratefulness and unbelief and what will be the consequences of following either way. The teaching brought by the Prophets and the Books has spread throughout the world in countless perceptible, and imperceptible ways, on such a large scale that no section of human population has remained unaware of the concept of God and the Hereafter, of the distinction between good and evil, and of the moral principles and legal rulings presented by them, whether it knows or does not know that it has obtained this knowledge only through the teachings of the Prophets and the Books they brought. Even those who disbelieve in the Prophets and the Books today, or are unaware of them, also are following many of those things which have reached to them actually through their teachings while they do not know what is the real source of these teachings.

اِنَّا اَعۡتَدۡنَا لِلۡكٰفِرِيۡنَ سَلٰسِلَا۠ وَاَغۡلٰلًا وَّسَعِيۡرًا ﴿۴﴾

(76-4) For the unbelievers, We have kept ready chains and fetters and a Blazing Fire.

اِنَّ الۡاَبۡرَارَ يَشۡرَبُوۡنَ مِنۡ كَاۡسٍ كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا كَافُوۡرًا ﴿۵﴾

(76-5) The virtuous [6] shall drink from a cup tempered with camphor water.

(6) The word abrar as used in the original implies the people who have done full justice to their Lord’s obedience, have carried out the duties enjoined by Him and abstained from the things forbidden by Him.

عَيۡنٗا يَّشۡرَبُ بِهَا عِبَادُ اللّٰهِ يُفَجِّرُوۡنَهَا تَفۡجِيۡرًا ۝٦

(76-6) This will be a gushing spring [7] wherefrom Allah's servants [8] shall drink wine, a spring from which they will take out channels wherever they wish. [9]

(7) That is, it will not be camphor-mixed water but a natural fountain, the purity, coolness and agreeable odor of its water will resemble camphor.

(8) Although the words ibad Allah (servants of Allah), or ibad ar-Rehman (servants of ar-Rehman), can be used for all men literally, for every human being is God’s servant, yet wherever these words occur in the Quran they only imply the righteous men. In other words, the wicked ones who have excused themselves from Allah’s servitude do not deserve that Allah should honor them with the honorable title of ibad-Allah or ibad ar-Rehman, attributing them to His own Holy Name.

(9) It does not mean that they will use spades and picks to dig out its channels and will take out its branches whithersoever they please, but that their one single command and desire will be enough to cause a fountain to gush forth from wherever they please in Paradise.

يُوۡفُوۡنَ بِالنَّذۡرِ وَيَخَافُوۡنَ يَوۡمًا كَانَ شَرُّهٗ مُسۡتَطِيۡرًا ۝٧

(76-7) These will be the ones who fulfil their vows [10] and dread the Day whose woe shall be spread far and wide;

(10) One meaning of fulfilling the vow is that one should fulfill. The second, that one should fulfill what one has pledged oneself to do. The third, that one should fulfill what one has been enjoined; what is obligatory for one to do, whether one has been enjoined it, or is self imposed. Of these three the second meaning is the best known and generally the same is implied by fulfilling the vow. In any case, these righteous people have been regarded as praiseworthy either because they carry out the duties enjoined by Allah, or because if they vow to Allah to perform certain good deeds which Allah has not enjoined on them, they fulfill even those self imposed vows, not to speak of showing any negligence in carrying out the duties which Allah has actually enjoined on them.

As for the commandments concerning the vow, it would be useful to explain at length here so as to enable the people to avoid the errors and rid themselves of the misunderstandings with regard to fulfilling the vow and learn the correct rules pertaining to it.

(1) The jurists have mentioned four kinds of the vow: (a) that one should pledge to Allah that he would perform such and such a good act to earn His good pleasure; (b) that one should make a vow that he would perform such and such a good act in gratitude to Allah if He fulfilled his such and such wish and desire or need. Both these kinds of the vow have been termed nadhr tabarrur (i.e. vows for a good cause) by the jurists, and it is agreed by all that it is obligatory to fulfill them; (c) That one should pledge to do an unlawful thing or to refrain from an obligatory thing; (d) that one should bind oneself to do a permissible thing, or to refrain from an obligatory thing, or pledge to do an unworthy thing. These two kinds of the vow have been termed nadhr lajaj (i.e. vow of ignorance, disputation and stubbornness) by the jurists. About the third kind of the vow (c), it is agreed that it does not take place at all; and about the fourth kind of the vow (d), the juristic opinion is divided. Some jurists say that it should be fulfilled; some others say that one should expiate the breaking of the oath, and still others that one has the option to fulfill the vow or to expiate it. According to the Shafeis and the

Malikis this vow does not take place at all, and according to the Hanafis both these kinds of the vow entail expiation.

(2) Several Ahadith show that the Prophet (peace be upon him) has forbidden making a vow with a view to changing the destiny, or with a view to making an offer to Allah that if He fulfilled his such and such wish, he would perform such and such good act, not in gratitude to Allah, but in exchange for His help. Abdullah bin Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) has reported that once the Prophet (peace be upon him), while he forbade the making of a vow, said; “It cannot avert anything which is about to befall, but through it something is extracted from the miserly person.” The last sentence of the Hadith means: The miserly person is not prone to spend anything in the cause of Allah; because of the vow he gives away something in charity in the greed that Allah would accept his offer and change his destiny for him. Another tradition from Abdullah bin Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) is to the effect; The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: the vow can neither hasten anything nor defer anything, but through it something is extracted from the miserly person. In another tradition he says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade making of the vow and said: “It does not bring any good, but it is a means whereby something is extracted from the miserly person.” Several traditions on the same subject have been related by Muslim from Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him), and in one tradition which both Bukhari and Muslim have related, he reports that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “As a matter of fact, the vow cannot bring the son of Adam anything which Allah has not ordained for him, but the vow sometimes coincides with the destiny itself and through it the divine will takes out from the possession of the miserly person that which he was not inclined to give away willingly.” This same theme is further explained by the tradition of Abdullah bin Amr bin Aas according to which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “True vow is that whereby Allah’s goodwill and approval may be sought.”

(3) Another rule that the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave concerning the vow is that only that vow should be fulfilled,

which is in obedience to Allah; the vow made in disobedience to Allah should never be fulfilled. Likewise, there can be no vow concerning a thing which is not in his power to perform. Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “The one who made a vow that he would obey Allah, should obey Him, and the one who made a vow that he would disobey Allah, should not disobey.” Thabit bin Dahhak says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “There can be no question of fulfilling a vow made in the disobedience of Allah, nor in something which is not in his possession.” Muslim has related a tradition on the same subject from Imran bin Husain; and in Abu Daud a tradition has been reported in greater detail from Abdullah bin Amr bin Aas, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “No vow and no oath is of any use in an act which is not in the power of man to perform, or which involves disobedience of Allah, or severance of relations with kindred.”

(4) One should not fulfill a vow which is made to perform an act which is of no good in itself, which is useless, or involves unbearable hardship or self torture, and might have been self imposed as an act of virtue. In this connection, the sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) are very clear and definite. Abdullah bin Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) says that once when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was giving a sermon, he saw a man who was standing in the sun. He asked who he was and why he was standing in the sun. The people said that he was Abu Israil: he had vowed that he would keep standing and would not sit, nor take shade, nor speak to anybody, and would keep fasting. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “Tell him to speak, to come in the shade and sit, but to observe the fast.” Uqbah bin Amir Juhani says: “My sister vowed that she would go for Hajj barefoot and also vowed that she would not cover her head with a garment during the journey. The Prophet said: Tell her to go by a conveyance and to cover her head.” Muslim has related several traditions on this subject with a little variation in wordings. Abdullah bin Abbas reporting the incident concerning Uqbah bin Amir's sister, has reported the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) words to the effect: “Allah has no need of her vow: tell her to use a conveyance.” In another tradition Ibn

Abbas says, “A man said: My sister has vowed to go and perform Hajj on foot. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: “Allah has no need that your sister should undergo hardship. She should go for Hajj by a conveyance.” Anas bin Malik has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw, probably during the Hajj journey, an old man being supported between his two sons. When he asked what was the matter with him, it was said that the old man had vowed to go on foot. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “Allah is free from this that the man should place himself in agony. Then he commanded him to ride.”

(5) If it is not practically possible to fulfill a vow, it may be fulfilled in some other way. Jabir bin Abdullah says: “On the day of the conquest of Makkah, a man stood up and said: O Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah, I had vowed that if Allah made Makkah fall at your hand, I would pray two rakahs in Bait al-Maqdis (Jerusalem). The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied, say the prayer here. He again asked the same thing and the Prophet (peace be upon him) again gave the same reply. When he asked it again, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: All right, as you please.” According to another tradition, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “By Him Who has sent Muhammad with the truth, if you pray here it will suffice for you instead of your praying at Bait al Maqdis.”

(6) The opinion among the jurists is divided concerning the person who vows to give away all his possessions for the cause of Allah. Imam Malik says that he should give away one third of his possessions, and Sahnun from among the Malikis has expressed the opinion that he should give away so much of his possessions as does not subject him to hardship later. Imam Shafei says that if the vow is of the nature of tabarrur (i.e. for a good cause), he should give away all his possessions, and if it is of the nature of lajaj (i.e. a vow of ignorance), he has the option to fulfill the vow or to expiate the oath. Imam Abu Hanifah says that he should give away all such possessions as are subject to zakat, but the vow will not apply to those possessions which are exempt from zakat, e.g. house, or other such properties. Imam Zufar from among the Hanafis is of the opinion that he should give away

everything in charity after he has taken out two months' maintenance for his family.

Hadrat Kaab bin Malik says: "When I was granted forgiveness for incurring Allah's displeasure for staying behind on the occasion of the Battle of Tabuk, I went before the Prophet (peace be upon him) and submitted: My repentance also included that I would give away all my possessions in charity for the sake of Allah and His Messenger. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: No, do not do that. I said, then half of the possessions? He said: No. I said, then one third of the possessions? He replied: Yes. According to another tradition, the Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: "Withhold some of your possessions for yourself: this would be better for you." Imam Zuhri says: "Information has reached to me that Abu Lubabah (who had similarly incurred displeasure in connection with the battle of Tabuk) said to the Prophet (peace be upon him): "I shall give away all my possessions for the sake of Allah and His Messenger in charity." The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: "For you it would be enough to give away only one third of it."

(7) Should a person who vowed to perform a good act before embracing Islam, fulfill it after he has embraced Islam? The Prophet's (peace be upon him) ruling in this connection is that he should fulfill it. According to a tradition in Abu Daud and Tahavi, Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) is reported to have vowed in the pre Islamic days that he would observe itikaf (devotional seclusion) in the Masjid al-Haram (for one night, or according to others, one day). After embracing Islam when he asked for the Prophet's (peace be upon him) ruling, he replied: "Fulfill your vow." Some jurists have taken this ruling of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to mean that it is obligatory to do so, and some others that it is commendable.

(8) About the question whether the heirs are under obligation to fulfill a vow made by the deceased person or not, the juristic opinion is divided. Imam Ahmad, Ishaq bin Rahawaih, Abu Thaur and the Zahiris say that if the deceased person had vowed to observe the fasting or perform the prayer but could not fulfill

the vow, the heirs have to fulfill it. The Hanafis say that if the vow pertained to a bodily worship (e.g. the prayer or the fasting), the heirs are under no obligation to fulfill it, and if it pertained to monetary worship and the deceased did not leave any will for his heirs to fulfill it, they are again under no obligation to fulfill it, but if he left a will, it will be obligatory for the heirs to fulfill it from his inheritance up to one third of its extent. The Maliki viewpoint also is somewhat the same. The Shafeis say that if the vow pertains to a non monetary worship, or if it pertains to a monetary worship and the deceased person did not leave any inheritance, the heirs are under no obligation to fulfill it; and if the deceased left some inheritance, the heirs would be bound to fulfill the vow pertaining to a monetary worship, no matter whether the dying person left a will or not. In the Hadith there is a tradition from Abdullah bin Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) on this subject to the effect: Saad bin Ubadah asked for the Prophet's (peace be upon him) verdict, saying: My mother has died and she had made a vow which she could not fulfill. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Fulfill the vow on her behalf. Another tradition from Ibn Abbas is to the effect: A woman went on a sea journey and vowed that if she returned home safe and sound, she would observe fast for a month. On her return home she died. Her sister or her daughter came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to ask for his decision. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: "Observe the fast on her behalf." Abu Daud has related another tradition with the same content from Buraidah, saying: "A woman asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) a similar thing and he gave the same reply as mentioned above." Since these traditions are not explicit as to whether the rulings the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave pertained to its being obligatory or commendable, and since about the vow made by Saad bin Ubadah's mother also it is not clear whether it pertained to a monetary worship, or a bodily worship, there have arisen differences among the jurists on this question.

(9) As for an unlawful vow it is clear that it should not be fulfilled. However, there is a difference of opinion as to whether it entails expiation or not. On this point, since the traditions differ, the juristic opinion is also divided. According to

one kind of the traditions the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded the person concerned to make the expiation. Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: There is no vow in the disobedience of Allah, and its expiation is the expiation of breaking the oath. In the case of Uqbah bin Amir Juhani's sister (mentioned above), the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded that she should break her vow and fast for three days. In the case of another woman also who had vowed to go for Hajj on foot, he commanded that she should go by a conveyance and should make expiation for the oath. Ibn Abbas has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The one who made a vow but did not specify what the vow was about, should expiate for the oath, and the one who made a vow to perform a sinful act, should expiate for the oath, and the one who made a vow to perform something which he does not have the power to perform, should expiate for the oath, and the one who made a vow to do something which he can do, should fulfill it. On the other hand, there are the traditions which show that there is no expiation in this case. The person who had vowed that he would stand in the sun and would not speak to anyone. Making a reference to him in Muwatta, Imam Malik writes: "I could not know by any means whether the Prophet (peace be upon him) besides commanding him to break the vow might also have told him to make the expiation. Abdullah bin Amr bin Aas has reported that the Prophet said: "If one swearing an oath for something later finds that another thing was better than that, he should abandon it and should adopt the better course and the abandonment itself is the expiation." Baihaqi says that this Hadith and Abu Hurairah's this tradition: "He should adopt the better course and this is its expiation" are not established. Imam Nawawi discussing these traditions of the Hadith in his commentary of Sahih Muslim writes: "Imam Malik, Shafei, Abu Hanifah, Daud, Zahiri and other scholars say that the vow made to do a sinful thing is void and ineffectual and it does not entail any expiation if not fulfilled, but lmam Ahmad says that it entails expiation."

وَ يُطۡعِمُوۡنَ الطَّعَامَ عَلٰی حُبِّہٖ مِسۡکِیۡنًا وَّ یَتِیۡمًا وَّ اَسِیۡرًا ﴿۸﴾

(76-8) those who, for the love of Him, [11] feed the needy, and the orphan, and the captive, [12]

(11) Most of the commentators hold the view that the pronoun in hubbi-hi refers to food. Accordingly, they interpret the sentence to mean: “In spite of the food’s being agreeable and tasty and that they need it, they give it away to others.” Ibn Abbas and Mujahid say: They do so because of their fondness for feeding the poor (ala hubb-il-it am); and Fudail bin Iyad and Abu Suleman ad-Darani say: They do so out of love for Allah. In our opinion the sentence in the next Ayat “We feed you only for the sake of Allah” supports the last meaning.

(12) The custom in the ancient days was that the prisoners were put in fetters and shackles and taken out daily to go about the streets begging food. Later the Islamic government abolished this custom. In this verse, the captive implies every such person who is in bondage, whether he is an unbeliever, a Muslim, a war prisoner, or imprisoned in consequence of a crime, and whether he is provided food in that state, or made to beg for it. In any case, to feed a helpless person who cannot do anything to earn a living is an act of great virtue.

اِنَّمَا نُطۡعِمُكُمۡ لِوَجۡهِ اللّٰهِ لَا نُرِيۡدُ مِنۡكُمۡ جَزَآءً وَّ لَا شُكُوۡرًا ۝٩

(76-9) (saying): [13] “We feed you only for Allah's sake; we do not seek of you any recompense or thanks, [14]

(13) Although feeding a poor man is in itself a great virtue, yet fulfilling the other needs of an indigent person is no less virtuous. For example, to clothe a poor man, to arrange treatment for a sick person, or to help a debtor who is harassed by his creditor, is an act of equally great virtue. Here, a particular kind of virtue in view of its importance has been presented only as an example, but the real object is to stress giving help to the needy.

(14) It is not necessary that this may be said in so many words while feeding the poor man. It may be said in the heart; in the sight of Allah this is as meritorious as saying it with the

tongue. But saying these words with the tongue has been particularly mentioned so as to set the person being helped at ease that no thanks or recompense is due from him, so that he eats with full satisfaction and peace of mind.

اِنَّا نَخَافُ مِنۡ رَّبِّنَا يَوۡمًا عَبُوۡسًا قَمۡطَرِيۡرًا ﴿۷۶:۱۰﴾

(76-10) we fear from our Lord a Day that shall be long and distressful."

فَوَقٰىهُمُ اللّٰهُ شَرَّ ذٰلِكَ الۡيَوۡمِ وَلَقّٰىهُمۡ نَضۡرَةً وَّسُرُوۡرًا ﴿۷۶:۱۱﴾

(76-11) So Allah shall guard them against the woe of that Day, and will procure them freshness and joy, (15)

(15) Radiance and joy: radiance of the face and joy of the heart. In other words, all the severities and terrors of the Day of Resurrection will be meant only for the disbelievers and the culprits. The righteous will on that Day remain immune from every hardship and will be well pleased with their lot. The same theme has been expressed in (Surah Al-Anbiya: Ayat 103), thus: The time of great fright will not trouble them at all; the angels will rush forth to receive them, saying: this is the Day that you were promised; and in (Surah An-Naml: Ayat 89) thus: He who brings good deeds, will have a reward better than that, and such people shall be secure from the terror of that Day.

وَ جَزٰىهُمۡ بِمَا صَبَرُوۡا جَنَّةً وَّ حَرِيۡرًا ﴿۱۲﴾

(76-12) and will reward them for their steadfastness [16] with Paradise and robes of silk.

(16) Here the word sabr (patience) has been used in a very comprehensive sense. The whole worldly life of the righteous believers in fact has been described as a life of patience. From the time a man attains discretion, or believes, till death; his suppressing of unlawful desires, adhering to the bounds set by Allah, carrying out the duties enjoined by Him, sacrificing his time, his wealth, his effort, powers and abilities, even his life if so required, ignoring every greed and temptation, which might turn him away from Allah's way, meeting every danger and enduring every hardship faced on the way of the truth, giving up every gain and pleasure accruing from unlawful ways and means, bearing every loss and suffering and affliction incurred on account of his love for truth, and doing all this with full faith in the promise of Allah that He will bless the doer with the fruits of this righteous conduct not in this world but in the second life after death, turns the whole life of a believer into a life of patience, eternal and perpetual patience, all pervasive and life long patience.

مُّتَّكِـِٕيۡنَ فِيۡهَا عَلَى الۡاَرَآئِكِ ۚ لَا يَرَوۡنَ فِيۡهَا شَمۡسًا وَّ لَا زَمۡهَرِيۡرًا ﴿۱۳﴾

(76-13) There they will recline on elevated couches and will be subjected neither to the burning heat of the sun nor to bitter cold.

وَ دَانِيَةً عَلَيۡهِمۡ ظِلٰلُهَا وَ ذُلِّلَتۡ قُطُوۡفُهَا تَذۡلِيۡلًا ﴿۱۴﴾

(76-14) The shades of Paradise will bend over them, and its fruits will be brought within their easy reach;

وَ يُطَافُ عَلَيۡهِمۡ بِاٰنِيَةٍ مِّنۡ فِضَّةٍ وَّ اَكۡوَابٍ كَانَتۡ قَوَارِيۡرَا ﴿۱۵﴾

(76-15) and there shall be passed around them vessels of silver [17] and goblets of crystal, [18]

(17) According to (Surah Az-Zukhruf: Ayat 71), vessels of gold shall be passed round to them, but here of silver. This shows that vessels of gold as well as of silver shall be passed round to them as required by the occasion.

(18) That is, though silver, it will be as transparent as glass, vessels of this kind of transparent, crystal like silver will be the special characteristic of the vessels in which drinks will be served to the people of Paradise.

قَوَارِيرَا۠ مِن فِضَّةٍ قَدَّرُوهَا تَقۡدِيرًا ١٦

(76-16) goblets bright as crystal but made of silver, filled to exact measure. (19)

(19) "In due measure": filled accurately according to the desire of every person, neither over-filled nor under-filled. In other words, the attendants of the dwellers of Paradise will be so judicious and discerning that they will have accurate judgment about everybody whom they serve wine as to how much of it he wishes to drink. (For the characteristics of the wine of Paradise, see (Surah As-Safat: Ayats 45-47 and the E.Ns 24-27), (Surah Muhammad: Ayat 15 and E.N. 22), (Surah At-Tur: Ayat 23 and E.N. 18), (Surah Al-Waqiah: Ayat 19 and E.N. 10).

وَيُسۡقَوۡنَ فِيهَا كَأۡسٗا كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا زَنجَبِيلًا ١٧

(76-17) Therein they shall be served a cup flavored with ginger,

عَيۡنٗا فِيهَا تُسَمَّىٰ سَلۡسَبِيلًا ١٨

(76-18) drawn from a spring (in Paradise) called Salsabil. (20)

(20) This is to suit the taste of the Arabs who liked the wine flavored with ginger mixed water. But this flavoring will not be achieved by adding ginger mixed water to it: it will be a natural fountain which will have the flavor of ginger but without its bitterness; Therefore, it will be called Salsabil, which implies such water as flows gently and pleasantly down the throat on account

of its being sweet, light and palatable. Most commentators think that the word salsabil has been used here as an adjective of the fountain and not as a name for it.

وَ يَطُوۡفُ عَلَيۡهِمۡ وِلۡدَانٌ مُّخَلَّدُوۡنَ اِذَا رَاَيۡتَهُمۡ حَسِبۡتَهُمۡ لُؤۡلُؤًا مَّنۡثُوۡرًا ۱۹

(76-19) There boys of everlasting youth shall go about attending them: when you see them, you would think that they are scattered pearls. (21)

(21) For explanation, see(Surah As-Saffat: E.N. 26), (Surah At-Tur: E.N. 19), (Surah Al-Waqiah: E.N. 9).

وَ اِذَا رَاَيۡتَ ثَمَّ رَاَيۡتَ نَعِيۡمًا وَّ مُلۡكًا كَبِيۡرًا ۲۰

(76-20) Whither to you look around, you will see an abundance of bliss and the glories of a great kingdom. (22)

(22) Even if a person might have lived a pauper in the world, in the Hereafter when he is admitted to Paradise, on the basis of his good deeds, he will live as though he were the owner of a splendid kingdom.

عٰلِيَهُمۡ ثِيَابُ سُنۡدُسٍ خُضۡرٌ وَّ اِسۡتَبۡرَقٌ وَّ حُلُّوۡۤا اَسَاوِرَ مِنۡ فِضَّةٍ وَ سَقٰىهُمۡ رَبُّهُمۡ شَرَابًا طَهُوۡرًا ۲۱

(76-21) They [i.e., the virtuous] shall be attired in garments of fine green silk and rich brocade (23) and will be adorned with bracelets of silver. (24) Their Lord will give them a pure wine to drink. (25)

(23) The same theme has been expressed in (Surah Al-Kahf: Ayat 31), thus: “They (the dwellers of Paradise) will wear colored robes of silk and rich brocade and will be reclining upon raised thrones.” On this basis, the opinion of the commentators who have expressed the view that this implies the sheets of cloth which will be hanging over their thrones or bedsteads or that this would be the dress of the boys who would be moving about

serving them does not seem to be correct.

(24) In (Surah Al-Kahf: Ayat 31), it has been said: “They will be adorned with bracelets of gold.” This same theme has also occurred in (Surah Al-Hajj: Ayat 23) and (Surah Fatir : Ayat 33) above. When all these verses are read together, three possibilities become obvious.

(1) That sometimes they would like to wear bracelets of gold and sometimes bracelets of silver, both kinds of the ornaments being available for use as and when required;

(2) that they will wear bracelets of both gold and silver at the same time, for the combination of the two enhances the personal charms of the wearer;

(3) that whosoever desires will wear bracelets of gold and whosoever desires will wear bracelets of silver.

As for the question, why will the men be adorned with the ornaments when these are usually worn by the women? The answer is that in the ancient times the custom was that the kings and their nobles used to adorn their hands and necks and the crowns of their heads with different kinds of ornaments. In (Surah Az-Zukhruf: Ayat 53), it has been said that when the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) arrived in the Pharaoh’s court in his simple dress, with only a staff in hand, and told him that he was a Messenger sent by Allah, Lord of the worlds, the Pharaoh said to his courtiers: “What kind of a messenger is he, who has appeared before me in this state? If he was sent by the King of the universe, why were not bracelets of gold sent down on him, or a company of angels as attendants?”

(25) Two kinds of the wine have been mentioned above, first that to which water will be added from the fountain of camphor; second that to which water will be added from the fountain of

ginger, After these, making mention of another wine, with the remark that their Lord shall give them a pure wine to drink, gives the meaning that this will be some superior kind of wine, which they will be given to drink as a special favor from Allah.

اِنَّ هٰذَا كَانَ لَكُمْ جَزَآءً وَّ كَانَ سَعْيُكُمْ مَّشْكُوْرًا ﴿٢٢﴾

(76-22) Behold, this is your recompense and your endeavor has been appreciated. (26)

(26) In the original, kana sayu kum mashkura: “your endeavors have been accepted and recognized.” Saii implies the entire lifework that a person accomplished in the world, the works and objectives to which he applied his energies and abilities; and its being mashkur means that Allah has appreciated it. Shukr when expressed by the servant to God implies his gratefulness to Him for His blessings, and when it is expressed by God for the servant, it means that He has appreciated his services. It is indeed the kindness of the Master that He should appreciate the endeavors of the servant when the servant has only carried out his duties according to the Master’s will.

اِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْاٰنَ تَنْزِيْلًا ﴿٢٣﴾

(76-23) (O Prophet), indeed We have revealed the Qur'an to you in portions. (27)

(27) Though the addressee here apparently is the Prophet (peace be upon him), the discourse is directed to the disbelievers who said, “Muhammad (peace be upon him) composes the Quran deliberately by himself piece by piece; had it been from Allah, it would be revealed all at once. At some places on the Quran this objection bas been cited and answered see(E.Ns 102, 104, 105, 106 of Surah An-Nahl) and (E.N. 119 of Surah Bani Israil), but here Allah has answered it without citing it, saying emphatically: “It is We Who are sending it down, it is not the composition of Muhammad, and it is We Who are sending it gradually. That is, it is the requirement of Our wisdom that We should not send down Our message all together in a book form, but should send it piece by piece.”

فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَ لَا تُطِعْ مِنْهُمْ اٰثِمًا اَوْ كَفُوْرًا ﴿٢٤﴾

(76-24) So persevere with the command of your Lord (28) and do not pay any heed to the wicked and the unbelieving, (29)

(28) “Be patient”: Face patiently the hardships and difficulties of the great Mission your Lord has entrusted to upon you; endure firmly and steadfastly whatever comes to pass, without showing any weakness in this regard.

(29) “Do not obey”: Do not yield to any one of them so as to give up preaching of the true faith; do not be inclined to make even the least change in the religious beliefs for the sake of any denier of the truth, or in the moral teachings for the sake of a wicked person. Proclaim whatever is unlawful and forbidden to be so openly even if an immoral person might press you hard to show some lenience in this condemnation, and proclaim whatever is false as false and whatever is true as true publicly even if the disbelievers might use all their influence to silence you, or to make you adopt a little lenience in this regard.

وَ ا ذۡكُرِ اسۡمَ رَبِّكَ بُكۡرَةً وَّ اَصِيۡلًا ۖ ٢٥

(76-25) and remember the name of your Lord, morning and evening;

وَ مِنَ الَّيۡلِ فَا سۡجُدۡ لَهٗ وَ سَبِّحۡهُ لَيۡلًا طَوِيۡلًا ۖ ٢٦

(76-26) and prostrate yourself before Him at night, and extol His Glory during the long watches of the night. (30)

(30) The rule followed in the Quran is that wherever the Muslims have been exhorted to show patience against the disbelievers, immediately after it they have been commanded to remember Allah much and to observe the Prayer, which automatically implies that the power needed to meet the resistance of the enemies of the truth in the way of true faith can be obtained only by this means. To remember Allah morning and evening may also imply remembering Allah always but when the command to remember Allah at specific times is given, it implies the salat (Prayer). In this verse, bukrah means the morning and asil the time from the sun’s decline till sunset, which obviously covers the Zuhr and the Asr times. Night starts after sunset;

therefore, the command “to prostrate yourself in the night” would apply to both the Maghrib and the Isha Prayers. Then, the command “to glorify Allah in the long hours of night”, clearly points to the time of the Tahajjud Prayer. see (E.Ns 92-97 of Surah Bani Israil), (E.N. 2 of Surah Al-Muzzammil). This also shows that these have been the Prayer times in Islam from the beginning. However, the command making the Prayer obligatory five times a day with fixed times and number of rakahs was given on the occasion of miraj (ascension).

اِنَّ ۬ؤُلَآءِ يُحِبُّو نَ لعَاجِلَ وَ يَذَرُو نَ وَرَآءَهُمۡ يَوۡمً ثَقِيلًا۝٢٧

(76-27) Verily they love (the good of this world) that is hastily obtainable and are oblivious of the burdensome Day ahead of them. (31)

(31) That is, the reason why the disbelieving Quraish still persist in the errors and deviations of belief and morality and why they turn a deaf ear to your invitation to the truth is, in fact, their worship of the world and their heedlessness of the Hereafter. Therefore, the way being followed by a true God-worshipper is so different from and opposed to their way that there can be no question of any compromise between them.

نَ خۡنُ خَلَقۡنٰهُمۡ وَ شَدَدۡنَآ اَسۡرَهُمۡ وَ اِذَا شِئۡنَا بَدَّلۡنَآ اَمۡثَالَهُمۡ تَبۡدِيلًا۝٢٨

(76-28) We created them and strengthened their joints; and whenever We wish, We can change their faces entirely. (32)

(32) The sentence, “And when We will, We can replace with others like them with a complete replacement” can have several meanings:

(1) That whenever We please We can destroy them and replace them by other people of their own kind, who will be different from them in conduct;

(2) That whenever We please We can change their

forms; that is, just as We can make someone healthy and sound in body, so also We have the power to make somebody a paralytic, cause someone to be struck with facial paralysis and other to fall a victim to some disease or accident and become a cripple permanently;

(3) That whenever We will We can recreate them in some other form after death.

اِنَّ هٰذِهٖ تَذْكِرَةٌ ۚ فَمَنْ شَآءَ اتَّخَذَ اِلٰى رَبِّهٖ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٢٩﴾

(76-29) Verily this is an Exhortation; so let him who so will take a way to his Lord.

وَ مَا تَشَآءُ وۡنَ اِلَّاۤ اَ یَّشَآءَ اللّٰہُ اِنَّ اللّٰہَ کَانَ عَلِیۡمًا حَکِیۡمًا ۳۰

(76-30) But your willing shall be of no avail until Allah Himself so wills. (33) Surely Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise.

(33) Three things have been said in these verses:

(1) That whoever wills may adopt the way to his Lord;
(2) that one's willing to do a thing is not enough unless Allah so wills;
(3) That Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. If one considers these three things deeply one can fully understand the relationship between man's freedom of choice and Allah's Will, and it helps to remove all the confusions from the people's minds about the question of destiny.

The first verse shows that in this world the authority granted to man is only to the extent that he may decide to adopt any one of the different courses available for passing life here. This is the freedom of choice that Allah has given to him. For example, when a man confronts the question of earning a living for himself, he finds many ways before him of which some are lawful, as for example lawful kinds of labor, service, trade and business, industry, or agriculture, and some are unlawful as thievery, robbery, picking pockets, prostitution, trading in money (on interest), gambling, bribery and unlawful kinds of services and business, etc. The decision to adopt any one of these ways has been left to man's own free choice as to how he would like to earn his living. Likewise, there are different modes of morality. On the one side, there are the good qualities, like honesty, nobility, decency, justice, pity, sympathy and chastity, and on the other, the evil traits like wickedness, meanness, tyranny, dishonesty, and frivolity. Man has full freedom to adopt any mode of morality he likes. The same is the case with religion; man has many ways open before him in this regard also; atheism and denial of God, polytheism and idol worship, different combinations of monotheism and polytheism, and the unalloyed creed of God worship which is taught by the Quran. In these also, the decision to choose has been left to man as to which of them he wants to

adopt. Allah does not impose on him any decision of His own. If man may like to choose a lawful means of earning his living, Allah will not force him to adopt an unlawful means for it. Or that, man may like to follow the Quran, Allah will not force him to become an atheist, polytheist or disbeliever. Or that, man may like to become a good man, Allah will not force him to become an evil man.

But after man has exercised this freedom of choice whether can he practically also do the same which he wants to do, depends on Allah's Will, His leave and His grace. If the Will of Allah be to let the man do what he has willed or decided to do, then alone can he do it; otherwise he cannot do anything without Allah's Will and His leave, however hard and seriously he may try to do it. This same thing has been said in the second verse. This can be explained by an example. If man had been delegated all the powers in the world and permitted to do whatever he pleased, the system of the world would have been disrupted. One murderer was enough to murder all the people in the world if he were given the freedom to kill anybody he liked. One pickpocket could pick the pocket of everyone if he were given the option to pick anyone's pocket he pleased. One thief was enough to steal whatever he liked; one adulterer to commit rape on every woman, one robber to plunder every house, if each one of these had full powers to act as he desired. Therefore, Allah has kept this in His own power whether He may allow or disallow the man to follow the right or the wrong path that he chooses to follow or not. The person who, giving up error, wants to adopt the right way is also granted righteousness only by Allah's leave and will. However, the condition is that the decision to give up error and choose guidance should have been taken by the man himself; otherwise just as Allah does not make anybody a thief or murderer or atheist or polytheist forcibly, so also He does not make anybody a believer forcibly.

After this, the third verse removes the misunderstanding whether Allah's willing may not be arbitrary. That is why it has been said that "Allah is All-Knowing, Al-Wise." That is whatever He does, He does it on the basis of knowledge

and wisdom; therefore, there can be no possibility of any error in His decisions. He decided with full knowledge and wisdom as to who should be given a particular kind of help and who should not be given it, who should be allowed to do a particular work and who should not be allowed to do it. To the extent that Allah provides opportunities to man and makes the conditions favorable for him, he can work according to his desire, whether it be good or evil. The question of guidance also is no exception to it. Allah alone knows on the basis of His knowledge and He alone determines on the basis of His wisdom as to who deserves to be guided and who does not. see(E.N. 41 of Surah Al-Mudathir).

يُّ دۡخِلُ مَنۡ يَّشَآءُ فِىۡ رَحۡمَتِهٖ ؕ وَ الظّٰلِمِيۡنَ اَعَدَّ لَهُمۡ عَذَابًا اَلِيۡمًا ۳۱

(76-31) He admits to His Mercy whomsoever He pleases. As for the wrong-doers, He has prepared for them a grievous chastisement. (34)

(34) In this verse “wrongdoers” imply the people whom the revelations of Allah and the teachings of His Prophet (peace be upon him) may reach, yet they deliberately and consciously decide that they would not obey and follow them. This also includes those unjust people who may plainly say that they do not accept the revelation as God’s revelation and the Prophet as God’s Prophet, or that they do not believe in God at all, and also those wicked people who may not refuse to believe in God and the Prophet and the Quran, but they are resolved not to obey and follow them. As a matter of fact, both these groups are unjust and wicked. As regards the first group, their case is clear and obvious; but the second group is no less wicked; it is also hypocritical and treacherous. Verbally, they say that they believe in God and the Messenger and the Quran, but in their hearts and minds they are resolved not to follow them, and their practical conduct of life is also opposed to it. About both Allah has declared that He has prepared for them a painful torment. They might strut about in the world, enjoy life as they like, boast and brag of their superiority, but ultimately they will be subjected to a disgraceful punishment; they cannot enter and enjoy Allah’s mercy in any way.